

VZCZCXRO7523  
RR RUEHAG RUEHROV  
DE RUEHUB #0210/01 0641945  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 051945Z MAR 07  
FM USINT HAVANA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1392  
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS  
RUESDM/JTLO MIAMI FL  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0063  
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HAVANA 000210

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE DEPT FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2017

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: CUBAN OPPOSITION TO REGIME: THE (ART) SHOW MUST GO  
ON

HAVANA 00000210 001.3 OF 002

Classified By: COM Michael E. Parmly for Reason 1.4(d).

1. (C) Summary: Using detentions, mob actions and other methods, the Cuban Government blocked at least 27 pro-democracy and human rights activists from attending a USINT-facilitated opposition art show on March 2, but at least 70 others managed to participate. State Security focused on youth activists, arresting, detaining or summoning many of the 27, including XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXXXX. USINT is aware of only one case of violence: Communist militants punched XXXXXXXXXXXX a number of times and roughed up two other activists as they tried to leave Santa Clara. Militant mobs, made up largely of veterans, were mobilized against at least five Santa Clara activists. The art exhibition, held at the PAOR, featured dozens of paintings and other works, many with a political message. Uncensored news materials were distributed and discussion flowed freely among participants, who included XXXXXXXXXXXX. End Summary.

2. (C) Cuban State Security launched operations against dissidents in Havana and the provinces of Matanzas, Santiago and Villa Clara on March 2, preventing at least 27 mostly young activists from attending an opposition art show in Havana. Two key organizers of the event – XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXXXX – were prevented from attending, and another, XXXXXXXXXXXX, remains incommunicado. XXXXXXXXXXXX told us on March 5 that he complied with a GOC order to appear at an immigration office in Havana on March 2 but was detained there until 8:30 pm, when the event ended. XXXXXXXXXXXX said a State Security major alluded to the event and mentioned the names of some of the participants. XXXXXXXXXXXX said the political police also confiscated his cell phone, its account based in Sweden.

3. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX told us late on March 2 that police took him into custody four blocks from the PAOR and released him after the event ended. Among other activists blocked were , XXXXXXXXXXXX. At least 12 activists in Santiago were prevented from attending, including XXXXXXXXXXXX, who was detained. Of 17 invitees from Santa Clara, only five managed to attend the show. Militant mobs were deployed outside the homes of a number of Santa Clara activists, including XXXXXXXXXXXX

4. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX met with us on March 5 and said he and two other activists, XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXXXX were attacked by a mob while trying to leave Santa Clara at around 4 a.m. XXXXXXXXXXXX. He said the three

were confronted by six people - four militants and two suspected State Security officials - and were quickly joined by four other thugs. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX said they informed the activists that they could not leave. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX said they lacked authority to block their movement, and that if the militants had a problem they should contact the police. This prompted a violent reaction by members of the mob, who pushed and shoved XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX colleagues and punched XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX several times, including in the head, left arm and chest. (Note: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. End Note.) Although XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX was rendered unable to travel immediately to Havana, Fernandez was able to board a bus and later attend the exhibition.

15. (C) At the art show, activists viewed dozens of paintings, ceramic masks and other artworks produced by opposition members. Among the works that generated the most buzz was Edgar Lopez Moreno's "This Is My City," a dark and somber scene of a city in disrepair, with gravestones representing lost freedoms and the graffiti "Down With Fidel," a message that has landed more than one dissident in jail for disrespect. Participants also gathered in small groups to discuss the GOC's latest crackdown, make new contacts and pose for photos in front of the prisoners of conscience

HAVANA 00000210 002.3 OF 002

quilt, on loan from a U.S. NGO. Among those present were four artists who took part in a half-hour art competition, in which they each sketched a portrait of Poloff's dog. Invitees then cast ballots on which sketch captured the best likeness, and the two leading vote-getters were each awarded an artistic photography book from the United States.

COMMENT

-----

16. (C) The regime's blocking of at least 27 youth activists follows the same pattern as the week before, when the GOC prevented at least 22 dissidents from attending the February 23 closure of the "Congress" of independent librarians affiliated with XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. The latest crackdown underlines the regime's sensitivity over political activities by the country's youth, who are largely disenfranchised, frustrated and eager for change.  
PARMLY